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Using Innovation Platforms for Development and Engineering Resilience into Socio-ecological systems

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Session: Basin [Limpopo] and Learning to Innovate

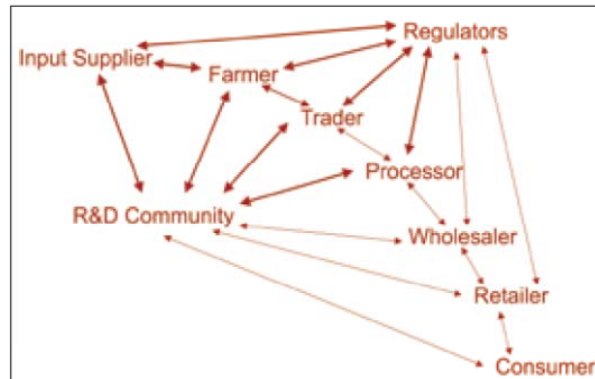
Key Message

This contribution illustrates how we use Innovation Platforms in the Limpopo Basin to design and implement the local agricultural development agenda. While such multi-stakeholder forums are successful in increasing efficiency in smallholder agricultural systems, we postulate that they also contribute significantly to increasing resilience within the socio-ecological system.

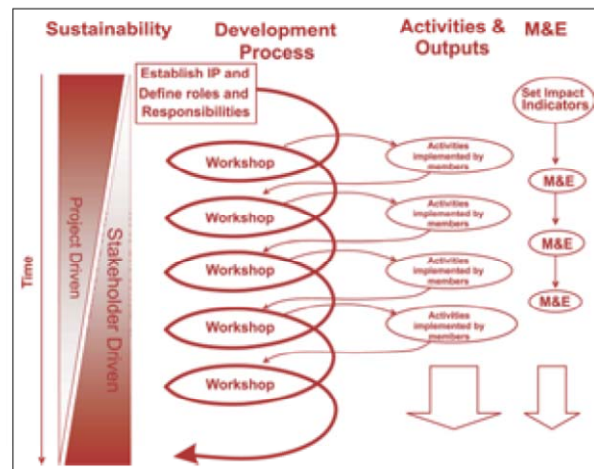
Summary

Informed by household surveys, focus group discussions and value chain analysis, Innovation Platforms (IPs) identify pressure points, devise solutions and, through an iterative process of testing and evaluating, facilitate the integration of improved production and marketing strategies. IPs can also contribute to increasing resilience in social-ecological systems. This paper illustrates how the IP can strengthen four clusters of factors contributing to resilience (Berkes, 2007): (i) Learning to live with change and uncertainty: the IP evaluates strategies to cope with changing environments and capitalize on emerging opportunities; (ii) Nurturing diversity: by including a diversity of players and partnerships, the IP introduces diverse technologies to increase livelihood options; (iii) Combining different types of knowledge for learning: cross-scale dialogue between partners brings different types of knowledge and viewpoints and stimulates learning through the iterative evaluation of interventions; (iv) Creating

opportunity for self-organization: the functioning of the IP promotes self-organization based on production or market interests. We believe that the IP itself will be locally maintained as the ability to organize and management increases. Building resilience thinking into existing Innovation Platforms will further strengthen their role in paving pathways out of poverty.



THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE INNOVATION PLATFORM INCLUDE A DIVERSE BUT HIGHLY COMPLEMENTARY GROUP OF KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE/ORGANIZATIONS



THE INNOVATION PLATFORM ENGAGES IN AN ITERATIVE PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS DURING WHICH STAKEHOLDERS MEET TO ANALYZE, PLAN, AND ADAPT PRODUCTION- AND MARKET-RELATED STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES. DURING THE SAME TIME THIS FORUM WILL ENGAGE IN A PARTICIPATORY M&E PROCESS TO EVALUATE PROGRESS.